Leys News

Delivered FREE to over 5000 homes across the Leys

You are cordially invited to attend the
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
of Leys News Limited
On Wednesday 25 May
2011 at 7.00pm
in the Leys News Office
See page 2 for details

ISSUE84 | MAY2011

COMMUNITY CELEBRATIONS!

Photograph: Gazmir Lame

PEOPLE across Oxford celebrated the Royal Wedding by holding street parties and community events, and in the Leys, the parties were in full swing by mid afternoon with events in Falcon Close, Nunnery Close, and the Blackbird Leys Community Centre.

In Nunnery Close neighbours came together for a double celebration as they marked the 50th anniversary of their homes being built and them all moving in. The central green area was the venue for an afternoon of eating and festivities and a special cake was made to mark the occasion.

Organisers of the event Heather Tucker and Liz Brandon worked with their neighbours to coordinate everything from the food to the bunting, gazebos, chairs and tables and to make sure that nobody missed the ceremony. Planning for the day started weeks ago when Liz sent out a questionnaire to all the houses in the close to see what people thought of the idea and to ask for volunteers to help out.

At the Blackbird Leys Community Centre, a day of fun and festivities for all the family was planned with games, arts and crafts, a bouncy castle, face painting and a Royal Wedding feast.

See centre pages for more Royal Wedding pictures

What do grandparents want?

Find out on page 3

Leys Scarecrow Competition hotting up!

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Green light for Leys Community Market

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Leys News

Issue 84

MAY 2011

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NOTICE

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

of

Leys News Limited

Wednesday 25 May 2011

Meeting begins at 7.00pm
in the Leys News Office
26 Kingfisher Green, Blackbird Leys, OX4 7BX

Light refreshments will be available
R.S.V.P. to the Office Manager
on 01865 711756
or officemanager@leysnews.co.uk

Letter from the Editor

Hello

Well what a month it has been! Whatever your personal feelings are regarding the Royal Family, it seems that the Leys positively embraced the social event of the year (well...so far!) and really enjoyed themselves on April 29.

Important national events are always a great way to engage with your neighbours, organise community events and get together with friends and family to enjoy the occasion. Our pictures on the centre spread will give you a taste of what was going on across the Leys on Royal Wedding day and I would like to say a special thanks to our fabulous community photographer Gazmir who spent his day off busily capturing the fun and festivities for Leys News.

Now the excitement of Kate and William's big day is fast becoming a happy memory, it is time to look forward to the changing seasons and what we hope will be a warm and sunny summer for all of us (maybe I shouldn't tempt fate!).

On our increasingly popular gardening page this month you will find top tips from our experts Stuart and Leah on how to get the best out of your garden or window box, and there is also some really exciting news about the Leys Community Market. If you want to get involved just get in touch via the email address in the article.

As ever there is plenty of great work going on across the Leys at the Clockhouse and elsewhere. Young people have nothing but praise for Marsha Jackson at the youth project and you can read all about that below.

I hope you enjoy this issue of your community newspaper-it is absolutely packed with great stories from your neighbourhood. Please do keep in touch and drop us a line at editor@leysnews.co.uk

Have a great month!

Best wishes
Sarah

Praise for YP2

ONE of the most important community projects on the Leys has received praise from young people who say it has helped them to forge friendships, learn new skills and give something back to their community.

Young people who have taken part in the YP2 project, run by Marsha Jackson, say it gives them the chance to try different activities and get out and about in their community.

Sanchez Romeo a YP2 Youth Trainee Worker said: "I have met many young people, and I have learned a lot from them, it may just be little things but everything counts. I love working with young people because there is always something new to learn or encourage, and I like guiding and supporting them through the hard times, through this I have become a better person.

"I've made a lot of new friends, and I enjoy seeing young people at their best and giving new things a try. That is what I love about the CDI youth project."

Callum Smith a Youth Multimedia volunteer added: "I am involved in the music/multimedia projects. I do not think many projects have the high spec equipment that we have, and we make good use of it. We also have a recording studio, so I come here every day and make beats and record tracks for anyone who would like to make music.

"The CDI/YP2 will teach you how to do it, no other projects do that, there's a lot going on at the project and a lot of opportunities."

Callum added: "You can give young people something and the young people will give something back it's a two way thing so that's good."

For some young people, YP2 is an extension of their family. Jamie Furlong is an only child and joined the project to make new friends.

He said: "I feel it's a part of my family. I don't have that much family because I'm an only child, I come to see everyone. I have got to give a lot of credit and thanks to Marsha, she's done all of this."

The half term project at YP2 offers young people the chance to try activities ranging from music production to table tennis, dance classes and photography.

Ellia Townsend added: "I come to CDI because there are opportunities here that I can't have at home. I am a drummer but I can't have drums because it's too loud, but they have drums here so I am happy to come in and play sometimes, I also volunteer here so that looks good on my CV. I naturally enjoy it here; it's a friendly atmosphere."

LETTERS

Dear Editor,
You are right, Jean, the four clocks on top of the Clockhouse just don't want to run either on time or in time. The Clockhouse in Greater Leys is a fantastic building for the over 50's owned and maintained by the Leys Housing Consortium (Catalyst, OCHA and A2Dominion). We are aware of the on going problem. A contracted company had fixed the problem end of last year. Unfortunately, the reliable running of the four clocks didn't last long and the problem is more complicated than anticipated. Therefore we are looking for a new company who will be able to fix the clocks long-term so that the four clocks will run like clockwork for years to come and people can catch the bus by looking at the time.

There is more to the Clockhouse than the clocks. Inside there are lots of activities going on for those who have reached their fifties, enjoy life to the full, want to share interests and are happy to meet new people. You can also hire lovely rooms in the Clockhouse at reasonable prices. Hidden in the centre of the Clockhouse is a little gem – a peaceful garden with a water feature. Thanks to the hard work of SLIGO gardening club, it's full of colourful spring flowers. If you or any resident would like to find out more about what is going on in the Clockhouse or hire a room, please do contact me.

Ines Kretzschmar, Leys Consortium Worker

Dear Editor,
Are all the over 50s in Blackbird Leys and Greater Leys unemployed? Am I a member of an excluded minority group?

I, too, would love to join in on the Yoga and Tai Chi and other activities organised by the Clockhouse Community Centre and I would enjoy meeting people of my own age group.

Sadly, it appears that if you have to support yourself by working - there is not a single activity that you can attend.

Elaine Turner

Dear Leys News
Elaine Turner's letter about evening activities at the Clockhouse makes an important point. I work for Leys CDI Clockhouse Project which is one of several community organisations based at the Clockhouse. Like Elaine, we would love to see more evening activities involving over-50s in the building. We don't want to exclude anybody.

The problem is that as a small community-based project for over-50s, it is a constant struggle to raise funds to keep going, and our resources in both money and staff time are very limited. Every activity relies on grant funding which we have to raise, and having enough people willing to support sessions week by week. We have tried offering evening over-50s sessions in the past, without much success in attracting people who are employed daytimes. I'm continuing to work on this and hope we can link up with other organisations to try some new initiatives later this year.

It would be great to hear from other people who are keen to have evening activities for over-50s on the Leys. Perhaps we can get a group together to talk, plan and get something going? Anyone interested please do get in touch with the project on tel: 01865 395908.

Meanwhile I'd also recommend Leys WI which meets the first Wednesday evening of every month from 7.30-9.30 pm at the Clockhouse. It's a lively group with an interesting and varied programme, and is very welcoming to women of all ages.

Sally Meachim
Leys CDI Clockhouse Project

Editoral Meetings

The next editoral meeting will be held at 11.00am, Tuesday, 10 May at the Boiler Room Cafe.

SUBMISSIONS

Leys News welcomes submissions and ideas for articles and photographs from all sectors of the community. If you would like to send us a press release about your community project please email it to editor@leysnews.co.uk and we will consider it for publication in a future issue.

Please note: do not embed photos and logos into word documents but sent send them as separate picture files.

The next issue of Leys News will be delivered on 28 May and the deadline for advertising and editorial copy is 15 May.

The Grandparent Project

What do grandparents who care for grandchildren under five want on the Leys?

That's what Leys Children's Centre and the Leys Clockhouse Project (for over 50's) want to find out. They are working together to find out if local grandparents are happy with the services that they have on the Leys or if they need anything else. They also want to let local grandparents know about activities at the Clockhouse and that they are welcome to visit Leys Children's Centre with their grandchildren. If you would like to know more about this project or have your say on what grandparents need, please contact Tanya Prescott on 07799893747. Or find out more by coming to an afternoon tea on Friday 20 May at The Boiler Room (at Pegasus School) from 2.00pm to 3.00pm. There will be free tea and cakes and children's activities - bring your grandchildren!

PHOTO: Sean McKiernan and his grandson Parris at the Leys Children's Centre.

COMMUNITY NOTICE

Help make your Community Centre a vibrant hub!

INVITATION to an Open Evening
Blackbird Leys Youth and Community Centre
Blackbird Leys Road, Oxford

May 19 at 6.30pm

Come along and help put the Community Centre at the heart of our community!

AS YOU may know the Blackbird Leys Youth and Community Centre is setting up a new Community Association. The idea is for the Centre to once again be run by local people as a vibrant hub for the community. The new association will aim to increase the range of social, leisure and learning activities at the Centre and bring people together across the diverse ages and cultural groups in The Leys.

You could also become a trustee of the Community Association. By contributing your skills you can make a real difference to the community and hopefully learn valuable new experiences!

So do come along to the Open Evening on May 19 at 6.30. It will be a fun event with food and refreshments and you can:

- Learn about what goes on at the Community Centre
- Find out about the new Community Association and how to get involved
- Share your views about what you'd like to see at your Community Centre
- Become a member of the Association. (*Free for the first year and entry into the Prize Draw!*)

The evening will act as the first Annual General Meeting of the proposed Leys Community Association.

For further information contact Paula Williams on 01865 402070 bblca@btconnect.com

County to consult on future of libraries

PLANS to close libraries across Oxfordshire are to be reviewed following protests from campaigners.

The county council has said it is listening to support that has been voiced for many Oxfordshire libraries over recent months and is now planning a countywide consultation starting in May and running until the end of September to ensure all views are taken into account.

Information about this consultation will be widely publicised including on the Council's Consultation Calendar at www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/consultation.

The Council will welcome dialogues with communities interested in applying to the Big Society Fund to support or extend library services once the consultation has started in May.

The Leys Online

AFTER many months the Leys On Line website is active. The main objective is to give residents the opportunity to look and see what is happening on the estate. Various organisations that have registered their names.

If your club, group, or organisation is not already registered please get in touch with the leysonline.net giving contact details, the name of club. If you already have a web site a link can be included.

Minutes of meetings, Councillors, agendas and a What's on Diary are also available so residents can keep up to date with t the Parish Councillors and organisations and what they are doing for the residents of Blackbird Leys/Greater Leys.

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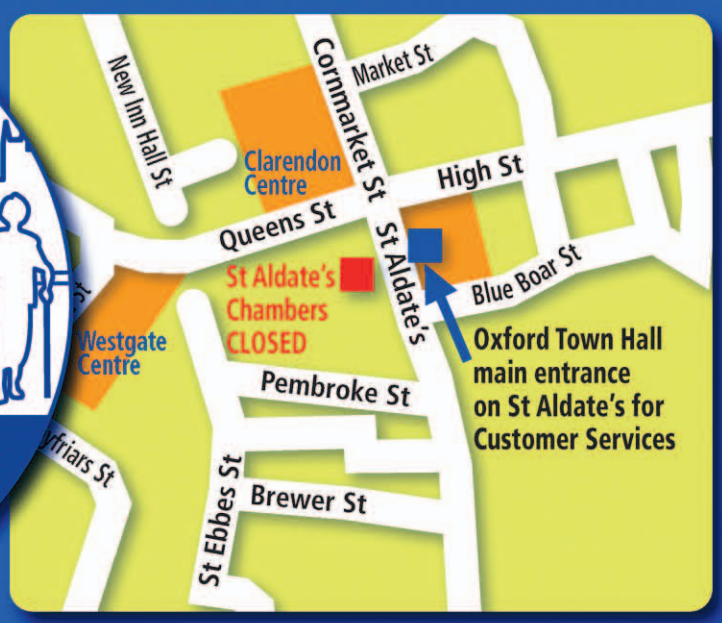

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HEALTH NEWS

Succeeding with feeding

BY BECKY TELFORD

FOR LOTS of mums struggling with the first few weeks of life with a new baby, breastfeeding can be a challenge too far and many women give up. Katie Gamble of Briar Way had always planned to breastfeed her first son Daniel, now four, but it was much more challenging than she had expected.

She said: "At times it was agony, and Daniel and I would both be crying our eyes out. I had assumed it would just happen, and we really struggled to make it work". Katie persevered, relying on her husband and surrounding herself with those friends and family who were supportive rather than those who were more negative. Katie explains that breastfeeding "is natural, but it is still something that has to be learned. In lots of ways it's like driving a car – it seems impossible at first, but the challenge is to get everything in harmony. And once you have mastered it, it becomes second nature". Something which can be seen in Katie's own life – she has since successfully breastfed all three of her children.

There is a lot of free help available to all mums on the Leys. In the first instance talk to your health visitor, but you can drop into sessions at the Leys Children's Centre or the JR as well. The Baby Café network also holds session around Oxford on different days, meaning there is always informal support available. And such sessions are not just there for when something goes wrong. As Katie notes, "Don't wait until your situation has become desperate to seek help and advice. I used drop-in sessions to touch base with other mums in the same situation as me, comparing notes and making me feel like my situation was normal, and that I would manage."

June sees National Breastfeeding week, something that will be celebrated at the Ley's Children's Centre alongside their continued commitment to the UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative. This initiative focuses on creating safe, comfortable places which supports breastfeeding mothers, making the Centre a welcoming place for breastfeeding at any time, and encouraging other facilities on the estate to be supportive as well.

A wide range of advice and guidance is available at the Children's Centre, for everyone from pregnant mothers thinking about their options to experienced mothers feeding older babies. Keep an eye out for a number of special events to be held around national Breastfeeding Week which is 19-25 June, including a celebratory breakfast with a very special guest – details to be announced!

The Pathway Workshop: *at the heart of the community*

BY MIA FLORES-BORQUEZ

AS A RESIDENT of Greater Leys for over 13 years, the Pathway Workshop remained to me an undiscovered gem. The dark and rather foreboding fascia hid bespoke and beautifully finished creations, which are produced by a small and close team of craftsmen. Stepping through their doors, an inspiring story of determination, perseverance truly captivates as a beacon of hope in these present hard times.

Inspiring too is the philosophy, which underpins the day-to-day activities of the Pathway Workshop: to treat their team of craftsmen, all experiencing either a physical or a learning disability, with utmost respect. The environment is one where people are nurtured with support, training, and instruction enabling them to progress at their own pace. The result, is that whether a master of bagging kindling for fire or a designer and craftsman for an individually commissioned piece, they achieve their maximum potential. Their reward for turning out exquisitely crafted items made from recycled wood is a growing appreciation of their talent, and a living wage.

The work that takes place at the site goes beyond training, and a job. The daily activities are a unique blend of occupational, cognitive, and person-centered methodology in a style that is unique to the Pathway Workshop. The successes of their approach are evident in those who have learnt appropriate life skills.

The continuing existenceof Pathway in these difficult times is owed to the combined effort of everyone associated with the charity: the workers, their relatives, supporters, customers, and the community at large. Joining in their forthcoming three kilometer annual sponsored fun run and walk for the less able on 7 May, would provide the charity with much needed funds. Most importantly, active support for the Pathway Workshop charity would be a testament of the place that they occupy at the heart of our great community.

Details of how you can help the Pathway Workshop charity continue with its work can be found at: www.justgiving.com/pathwayworkshop.

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Leys Scarecrow Competition hotting up!

The Leys Scarecrow Competition

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Name of Group planning to enter (eg Kingfisher Angling club, name of school, road or flats or business / service supplier)

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Return form either to: Church of Holy Family, 1 Cuddesdon Road; Russ and Sue Price 190 Pegasus Rd; or Adam Stevenson, 8 Fry's Hill.

THE Leys Scarecrow Competition is hotting up with local businesses getting on board to try and scoop first prize. Organised by The Holy Family Church to raise funds for roof repairs, the competition is open to groups, schools and businesses across the Leys. Free straw is being donated by a local farmer, chicken wire by Johnsons Build-base and wood by Pathways Workshop.

Zoe Callaghan surgery manager at the Leys Dental Practice said: "I'll be encouraging my colleagues to work together on our scarecrow. We will be discussing ideas at a staff meeting and will then work with them to produce their scarecrow."

Leys Dental Practice has been open since August 2009 but Zoe says many people on the estate still do not know where they are or that they still have vacancies for NHS patients. She feels being on the scarecrow trail will help Leys residents discover where the dentist is located.

Organisers hope that other groups on the estate will also see the benefit of building and displaying a scarecrow at their venue, or on the green by the top shops. It is not only a competition for schools, groups and clubs but also for individuals and families. Catalyst will be running a free workshop for all ages during half term on Tuesday May 31 between 2-5pm at the Dovecote. If you make your scarecrow at the Dovecote it is not too late to enter the competition but your details will not appear in the trail guide published in the June edition of Leys News. Ideally send off the form (below) today and then go along on May 31 to make your scarecrow or just pick up your free resources.

There are prizes of £75 and £50 to be won in each category, and you can make a scarecrow in a variety of ways. The easiest way is to take three pieces of wood- two metres (maybe an old broom handle) one metre and 30cm long. Attach them together to make your scarecrow's body and then take an old pair of tights and use part of the top to stuff into a face shape with straw or rags. Attach this with string to the top of the two metre pole. Now add old clothes- stuffed with straw or rags and make your character. Decorate the head with eyes, nose and mouth and add wool for hair and a hat.

From left to right are staff from the Leys Dental Practice: Zoe, Jade and Virjinia working on their scarecrow

The internet has some excellent sites with ideas and instructions check out the links below for more inspiration.

To find out how to get free, straw chicken wire and wood please contact Sue and Russell Price on 01865 429036 or go along to the workshop on May 31.

Check out these video clips:

www.monkeysee.com/play/2646-how-to-make-a-scarecrow
•www.suite101.com/content/how-to-make-a-scarecrow-a30512
www.thekidsgarden.co.uk/MakeASillyScarecrow.html
www.makescarecrows.com
www.henandhammock.co.uk/HelpingTheEnvironment/index.asp?id=156
www.suite101.com/content/how-to-make-a-scarecrow-a30512

NATALIE AXTELL and her daughter from Blackbird Leys receiving their 19" TV from the Cash Generator competition which ran in the April issue of Leys News.

SPRING ARTS AND CRAFTS MARKET IN OXFORD

A SPRING Arts and Crafts Market is being held in Oxford for local artists and people to showcase and sell their original work to the public.
The market is supported by the Oxfordshire Arts Partnership which is made up of the district councils and the County Council.

The Partnership's mission is to support local creative talent and provide opportunities for makers and artists to promote and sell their work directly to the public.

The market, in Broad Street on Saturday 7 May from 9am until 5.30pm, will offer a wide range of one-off pieces, including jewellery, paintings, cards, textiles and much more.

There will be 20 stalls selling a wide range of arts and crafts and the artists and makers will be on hand to talk about their work, help the public pick out that unique present and even take commissions for bespoke items if required.

The market is managed on Oxford City Council's behalf by Steve Boffy, an experienced arts consultant with a range of experience in developing and producing markets around the region.

The popularity of poultry

BY MIA FLORES-BORQUEZ

AS PRICES for essential foodstuffs rise and incomes stretch to breaking point, old traditions come to lend a helping hand. Domestic poultry keeping is becoming increasingly popular and its benefits celebrated.

Last year, some kind people gave me three hens to help me with grieving at the loss of my much-loved father. My initial flock comprised of two black Rhode Island and a Cream Legbar who produced two big brown eggs and one blue egg respectively each day. These were soon joined by two Isa Warren, the friendliest chickens I have ever come across. My husband's abrupt departure meant that I had to reduce my flock but kept the Isa Warrens and Gretel, my Cream Legbar. When my daughter died, my chickens kept me going with their antics; Gretel twice tried to hatch chicks and sat on clutches of eggs for weeks refusing to accept that the eggs would not hatch. Princesa and Bonita, the Isa Warrens, pecked at my back door when they heard me in the house. In the garden, they followed me everywhere and stopped to be stroked while we "talked". They even figured out what to climb so that they could watch me when I was inside the kitchen! By autumn, Haydee and Beatriz, two Khaki Campbell ducks joined them and, when they started mating, Jeremy, a white drake was added to the flock. I have had boundless rewards from my poultry; companionship, endless amusement, and a reliable supply of fresh eggs every day.

My neighbour's children keep a friendly interest in my poultry and I see them frequently propped up on the fence looking at the chickens and the ducks. On their return from school, I have even seen the children feeding them seeds. As they would like to keep poultry themselves but do not, my chickens and ducks are theirs by proxy. With their parents, I exchange eggs for bags of vegetable scraps, which we lower into our respective gardens using a novel system of bags tied on to ropes.

My poultry are the most efficient recycling system around; hardly any waste leaves my home. They eat chopped up vegetable scraps and old fruit; rid the garden of slugs and snails, produce manure which fertilizes the soil for growing vegetables, and reduces the number of visiting pets in my garden. Caring for my poultry has been easy. A friendly farmer and his wife deliver their food and straw once a month together with any extras to maintain their welfare like mite powder, water dispensers and food feeders. I share their progress with the friendly farmer and his wife and they provide any advice when needed. My regular monthly delivery does not exceed £10. Buying six duck eggs alone costs £2 and I get at least 12 duck eggs per week!

The poultry and I survived the sadness, their molting and the cold winter months together. I highly recommend keeping poultry for all that they have given to me during one of the most difficult years of my entire life.

Green light for Leys Community Market

BY LEAH OWENS

BUDDING entrepreneurs who are nurturing small businesses across the Leys have been given the thumbs up from environmental health bosses to sell their products at a new community market.

New independent, individual producers of low risk foods such as cakes, jams, and sweets will all be able to sell their wares at the market on a casual and occasional basis. The market will provide a springboard for enthusiasts and entrepreneurs to 'have a go' to see if what they are providing can be developed into a small business.

There are no barriers to selling fresh, home grown fruit and veg in their natural state.

The market is looking for individuals to provide:

- back garden or allotment fruit and veg
- home grown plants (food and flowers)
- craftspeople and artists
- bread bakers.

Organisers say they already have a couple of people who are cake bakers, but are still keen to hear from others.

Keen bakers and cake makers can get in touch at leysmarket@hotmail.co.uk

Professional sellers, who already appear at established markets, will be expected to have their own personal liability insurance.

For more information on 'low risk' and 'high risk' foods please contact leysmarket@hotmail.co.uk

It is hoped to have a trial market at the end of May/beginning of June.

Call for foster parents

THERE is a shortage of more than 10,000 foster carers in the UK and Oxfordshire County Council is aiming to recruit 35 new foster carers to provide care to local Oxfordshire children during the next year.

Two years ago a targeted recruitment campaign was run in the Greater Leys and Blackbird Leys area. A spokesman said: " We spent a couple of weeks talking to the local community. We are very fortunate to now have a small number of carers in this area who are currently caring for vulnerable children but we really want to increase this number. It was useful for us to be able to make people more aware of what is involved in fostering. There are lots of different types of fostering and people were keen to find out more.

"Children of all ages from babies to teenagers need fostering, but we particularly find it hard to place sibling groups, older children and children from black and ethnic minorities when we are matching children with foster carers.

Depending on the needs of children, foster care placements can range from just one weekend to a month, or can sometimes last for many years."

The short break scheme provides support to families who have a disabled child. This scheme relies on people to volunteer as carers just for a couple of days a month. It's a way of being able to foster even if you work full-time.

MORE INFORMATION is available at monthly fostering information evenings. The next few dates are: Tuesday 17 May and Tuesday 14 June

Meetings start at 6.30pm and are held at the County Hall, Oxford

To find out more details log on to www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/fostering or call 0800 7837524.

Leys News Gardening

Bursting out all over!

BY LEAH OWENS

THIS has to be my favourite time of year. Everything is bursting into life and colouring the landscape various shades of vibrant green, and of course gardens are bursting into life too. Suddenly everything is growing and I can barely keep up!

I grow most of my food in big pots and tubs, and at the moment I've got broad beans, courgettes, herbs and salad leaves peering out among the pansies and narcissus. In my seed trays I'm nurturing spring onions, beetroot, turnips, radish and tomatoes – when they're big enough they'll be potted on or planted in the ground.

My small raspberry plot (ten canes of Autumn Bliss), is looking much healthier this year – maybe because I trimmed back the canes and - once they'd grown back a bit - mulched around the bases with well rotted manure. I'm hoping for a bumper crop this time!

I've been meaning to put in some small raised beds since we moved in, but being of a lazy-ish disposition – and DIY skills that leave a lot to be desired – I've still not got around to it; and the kits you can buy are pretty expensive. However, I've had a bit of a brainwave – drawers! No, I'm not being rude. With my 'austerity Britain' head on, it came to me in a flash that old chests of drawers would make perfect raised beds. Just knock out the bases, place on levelled ground, fill with a topsoil/compost/manure mix and get sowing. No having to buy wood, no hammering of thumbs and turning the air blue and less landfill space used – bingo!

And finally, if you feel inspired to have a go at growing something but are feeling a bit trepidatious, can I suggest beans (any kind) and leaf salad? These are both fantastic for the first time grower as they're so easy and will save you a packet.

I love Bleauhilde French climbing bean for its gorgeous lilac flowers and intriguing purple pods (they go green when cooked), Scarlet Emperor runner bean (climber) for delicious flavour and prolific output and Speedy dwarf French bean, for super quick cropping.

For the climbers I make a beanpole wigwam and poke a fat seed into the ground, either side of each pole. The dwarf beans I tend to pop in wherever there's some space. I have them growing with clematis, flowering bulbs and in my spinach tubs. They're just brilliant at growing anywhere. Water the seeds well to give them a good start.

For the salad leaves use the plastic packaging trays from the fruit and veg you buy at the supermarket, or use washed out baked bean tins. Fill with compost, sprinkle with seed and cover lightly with more compost. Water gently.

Keep all seeds and seedlings moist (not soggy) and move indoors if there's a threat of frost. We'd love to see photos of your successful veg adventures. Who knows – if you get the growing bug you may want to sell your excess at the Leys Community Market!

Gardeners' Question Time

RADIO 4's Gardeners' Question Time embarks on an inaugural tour all over the UK this Autumn. Each night, resident chair Eric will be joined by three of his panel of expert gardeners, comprising of Chris Beardshaw, Matt Biggs, Bob Flowerdew, Pippa Greenwood, Bunny Guinness, Anne Swithinbank, Christine Walkden and Matthew Wilson.

The live setting for the long running team will also allow the well-established panel the chance to share their most memorable experiences as some of the UK's most esteemed gardening experts.

Audiences will also be able to enjoy videos of life behind the scenes at Gardener's Question Time headquarters and will be treated to a sneak peek of the panellists' very own gardens.

Tickets are now on sale for the live tour which comes to Oxford on Saturday 3 December 2011. Tickets are £22.50 and can be purchased from the New Theatre box office on George Street, by ringing 0844 871 3020 or by visiting www.newtheatreoxford.org.uk (phone and internet bookings subject to booking/transaction fee). For bookings of 10 or more, or for Equal Access bookings, please call 0844 871 3040.

Green Fingers

By Stuart Mabbutt

Bugs and Bulbs

JUST a short article this month as Spring has sprung and I am busy out in the garden, just like you all are no doubt, and struggling to find time to tap out my thoughts into the computer.

Two things are at the forefront of my mind, basically as I have been dealing with both issues today, and they are, failing Crown Imperial bulbs and controlling Chaffer Bugs.

Crown Imperials flower well in the first year of cultivation, but need work to get them to keep flowering. If grown well they have huge yellow or orange flowers, but poor flowering in almost always down to the fact they are in poor soil.

They need deep loose soil with copious volumes of organic matter, they like gritty well drained soil in a sunny place. They prefer alkaline soil but will grow in neutral soil too.

If you want them to flower year after year, they must be planted about one foot deep on a five inch layer of grit.

When the shoots first appear it is also worth applying some Growmore to help them along.

Stick to these guidelines and the rest, as they say, is "Chicken Feed".

The other matter on my mind today as I say is Chaffer Bugs. They eat the root of grass, turning your lawn yellow and if badgers and birds find them they will dig up your lawn to get at these scrumptious morsels.

These bugs can be controlled biologically by using nematode worms that you can buy via mail order or on the internet. The nematodes are mixed in water and applied direct to the lawn by drenching – almost flooding the infected area.

After applying, to keep the nematodes effective the lawn must be kept moist for the rest of the growing season.

If it dries out, the nematodes die.

Spring is great as the gardening starts in earnest, but so does the gardener's perennial fight against pests.

Happy Gardening

mail@leysnews.co.uk | phone: 01865 711756

A RIGHT ROYAL CELEBRATION FOR THE LEYS!

Photographs by Gazmir Lame

Left: The Royal Wedding gave everyone the chance to get Creative!

Above: Smiles all round from Heather Tucker and Liz Brandon from Nunney Close who helped aorganise the community party.

Left: Alice Page tucks in and enjoys the party.

Below: Festivities, food and drink brought neighbours together.

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Tuesday: 11.00am – 2.30pm, lunch available for a small fee
Friday: 9.00am – 2.45pm, breakfast and lunch available for a small fee
Dad's Zone: Saturday, 10.00am – 1.30pm, contact Conroy Harris on 0777 540 7524

PEGASUS: *Pegasus School, Field Avenue, Blackbird Leys OX4 6RQ*
01865 777175
Wednesday: 9.15am – 11.30am and 12.45pm – 3.00pm
Friday: 1.00pm – 3.00pm

WINDALE: *Windale School, Windale Avenue, Blackbird Leys OX4 6JD*
01865 777796
Monday: 9.30am – 11.30am

Courses for May, June and July
For more information or to book a place contact Anne Wells on 01865 779615

Knitting Group
Starting Monday 16 May
(every other Monday)
10.00am – 11.30am

Baby Signing
for babies age 9 months and over
Starting Tuesday 7 June
2.00pm – 2.45pm
To book a place on this course contact Valerie O'Malley on 01865 779615

Beginners Computer Course
Starting Thursday 12 May
12.30pm – 3.00pm

Entry to Working in Childcare
Starting Thursday 16 June
9.30am – 12.00pm

Informal Book Group
(every other Thursday)
Starting Thursday 12 May
1.00pm – 2.30pm

Health and Safety in the Home
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1.00pm – 3.00pm
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Out and about

BY MIA FLORES-BORQUEZ

THE last official day of Winter 2010/11, I spent walking with my son, Daniel. It was a beautiful and peaceful sunny day, warm and without breeze. Birds sung throughout our long walk, never far from us as if accompanying us on this adventure. Daffodils and narcissi in bloom were scattered all around our walk, greeting us, imparting a pungent sweet smell, cheering us along with a variety of golden sights. Red kites patrolled the light blue sky and cockerels let themselves be heard in the stillness of a sunny and warm afternoon.

Daniel and I made our way through a roundabout that is close to our house which, in Spring, is surrounded by the pink cherry blossom now almost in bloom. Just before we reached the fields that are bordered by Grenoble Road, the far end limits of the City of Oxford, we passed through small streets festooned with different types of shrubs in bloom. Blues and yellows seemed to be the predominant colours in the neighbouring streets and whites, further out towards the countryside.

We reached a pub at the top of Oxford Road in the village of Garsington. I knew that a group of walkers set off from there and wanted to find out whether I could join them for the next walk. I had never noticed that at the top of the hill there were two pubs and not one as I had thought. We went into the first pub and made enquiries about the walking group. We were told that the pub from where the group of walkers set off had recently been sold and the walkers now set off from the bus stop. Luckily for me the walking activity happened once a month, on the last Sunday of every month. I was in time to join the next walking activity on the following Sunday.

My son and I sat in the beer garden and feasted contentedly on peanuts and crisps. For months I had had a craving for salted peanuts which made munching the roasted nuts such a treat. We caught up on the latest happenings in both our lives and exchanged news about our on-going plans.

As we made our way back home, we walked over the top of the hill. In the distance breathtaking views of Denton, another small village, with a church tower that gleamed in the sun. As I looked down next to me, I noticed patches of deep purple on a mat of shinny dark green leaves, which stood a few centimeters off the grass. The purple flowers were wild violets, my favourite flowers. I knelt on the grassy bank to smell the flowers and their fragrance was sweet and intoxicatingly strong like perfumed Violet water of olden times. It was a joyous sight and a lovely experience.

We decided to return to Oxford following a bridlepath that snaked its way through farm fields. Horses out to pasture in the distance acknowledged our presence and continued feeding on the lush grass undisturbed. As we climbed the banks of a field, I noticed white flowers similar to the purple violets that I had just seen. On close inspection I saw that these were white wild violets. Not as perfumed as the dark purple violets but fragrant all the same.

Back in Grenoble Road, our senses were inundated by the sweet fragrance of honey, which came from the plum trees that were in full blossom. I knew these trees well as, in August of last summer, I had harvested several boxes full of plums for jam making. I could see clearly in my mind's eye the different types of plums that corresponded to the different blossom now announcing the harvest of a new season to come.

Do you have a favourite walk around the Leys? Please write in and tell us about it and include as much detail as you can so that other readers can enjoy it too.

Send an email to editor@leysnews.co.uk and put Out and About in the subject line.

REVIEW: EATING OUT

A Real Taste of Spice

BY DAVID POTTER

SIMPLY SPICE, an Indian restaurant, is found to the left of the main ground floor entrance of the Vue Cinema in the Ozone Park by the Oxford United Football stadium.

The restaurant specialises in Indian cuisine prepared by two well known chefs recruited from London and is a very popular venue for Indian sub-continent style weddings and celebration.

At the entrance is a bar serving a reasonable selection of beverages including Cobra beer. The main room manages to give an impression of being spacious but still intimate. The chairs are comfortable and the tables of a decent size.

My guest and I both started with poppadums served with a nice selection of chutneys followed by a speciality of the house called Thali. We both chose chicken as the meat.

The Thali is a stainless steel platter with a curry as a centre piece and little bowls of different dishes forming a complete meal with perfect balance between different proteins, grains, raw and cooked food, green and root, vegetables and yoghurt, it is an "all in one dish" that is typical of what an Indian family might eat.

It was certainly a filling dish and we thoroughly enjoyed the mixture of flavours. The chicken tikka masala was the best I ever had in my life and even the basmati rice was a world apart proving that Simply Spice does not compromise on quality.

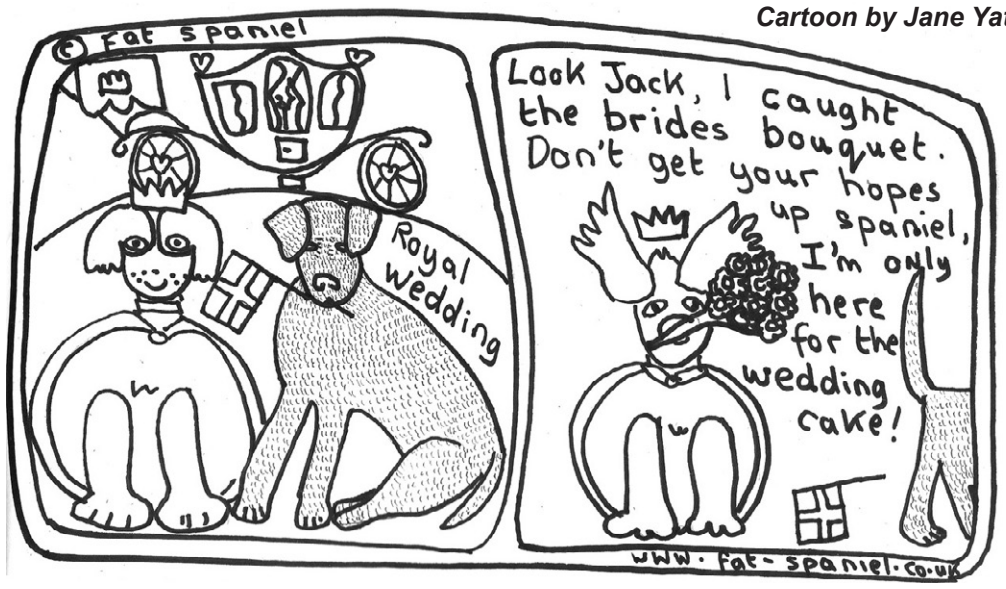
The service was excellent although I suspect that if there was a large crowd it might be somewhat slow.

The manager, Rajesh, asked how we had enjoyed the meal and explained that all the ingredients were fresh and all dishes cooked to order.

Rajesh also told us that, since the restaurant recently opened, they have spent time getting the operation running smoothly to ensure customers are not disappointed. He proudly showed me the results of a recent survey where all the customers surveyed said they would recommend it.

They are starting a marketing campaign to ensure people know about the restaurant and have a current offer which includes adult lunch buffet from Tuesday until Sunday for £5.99 with kids eat free and a fixed dinner in the evening for £5.95 only between 5.30pm - 6.30pm on weekdays.

Cartoon by Jane Yates



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If you are interested in studying at Oxford Brookes please contact
Peter Knipp on 01865 484886 or wknipp@brookes.ac.uk

Leys Learning

Training success for Jane

BY JANE YATES

DEAR READERS, my name is Jane Yates and I first wrote a Fat-Spaniel cartoon for Leys News in June last year.

As a dyslexic with a spelling age tested to be that of an eight-year-old, this was as far as I had attepted to go in becoming a journalist of any sort. I had no previous experience or qualifications in journalism.

But after being encouraged by Sarah the editor of Leys News to attend a course called Community Journalism Training which is sponsored by Oxford Brookes University, this all changed and now I write regularly for the paper.

The learning outcomes of the course enabled me to understand how a news story is sourced and how an idea, however mad it sounds, can be transformed into something that is both interesting and entertaining.

Sarah encouraged ideas and supported myself and the other students to work trough our ideas and to find our own writing style. We looked at other newspapers and talked about what we liked about them, how the use of images and text were arranged.

There was a range of students from all walks of life, learning levels and ages but we were all treated with the same respect. Peer support was encouraged and we worked jointly on things by bouncing ideas of each other.

The course helped to not only build my confidence but also my self esteem which from being unemployed for more than a year at that point had hit almost rock bottom.

We also learned about the role and function of community papers such as Leys News and its history. We covered so much in the course, like how to find information, research techniques, making sure that what you write is accurate, finding an angle of a story and how to interview someone.

The part I enjoyed the most was learning about the importance of photography. 'A good photo is worth a thousand words', so the saying goes. We learned that if you could grab the reader's interest with a photo, then they might read the story.

I liked this bit also because I have always been particularly bad at taking photos, so learning what the important elements of a photo are was useful and interesting.

Plus if I am honest this was probably the easiest part of the course for me to understand as I am an artist already and I was able to build on my visual knowledge and put this into practice in a piece I wrote about museums for the April addition.

I had my very patient daughter Emily stand and pose for over an hour and a half until I was finally satisfied that I had caught all the information in the image needed to tell the story with a short amount of words.

There are so many things I gained from this course like gaining confidence in team work and also about building relationships and contacts.

I would recommend you give this course a try, really, have a go, its FREE! Be a part of something in your community, discover your potential. We all gained confidence and the atmosphere was warm and friendly and there was tea and biscuits.

I would like to personally thank Sarah the Editor of Leys News who saw something in me that even I could not see myself, and gave me strength by her belief in me.

Effort, emotions and exams!

BY YASMINE HAJJI

A concern nearly all of us young people across Oxfordshire and England are experiencing is the stress and build up to the crucial exams that we are going to face over the next few months.

The beautiful, hot weather outside isn't much help either when you have to buckle down and make sure that you will succeed! To ensure that you are fully prepared your schools, teachers, family and friends are there to support you in this overwhelming time as you strive to work hard. As a year eleven student myself who has to sit 16 exams in the course of two months, I understand that revision can be boring, tiresome and you even contemplate bothering as there are so many other things you would rather be doing. But, remember! This may be a stressful and exhausting time however success in your GCSEs is important to getting the future you want. After this, there will be no more resits, no other chances to correct your mistakes, so use the time you have wisely to strive for those top grades to secure your desired career.

A few tips that I have taken on board to help me focus are firstly, don't waste your time, use it to the maximum and make sure that you don't leave it to the last minute when looking over your revision notes! Secondly, organise. If you don't plan and schedule what topics you are going to cover and when, you may find that you won't have gone over all of the subjects for your exam. Thirdly, take breaks! Make sure that you rest and divert your mind from revision for at least ten minutes so your brain is up to gear and you can focus properly. And lastly, enjoy it! Try to make revision sessions fun by incorporating colour, activities and even group sessions with friends to help make the information you're revising stick. Don't forget, your future is in your hands!

Brookes lecturer wins TV Quiz

A LECTURER from Oxford Brookes University was crowned Mastermind Champion 2011 after beating off tough competition in a final watched by two million viewers.

Dr Ian Bayley, a computer science lecturer at the university, scored 18 points and no passes in his specialist subject round and answered questions on paintings. He also scored 19 in the general knowledge round.

Ian said: "It feels very good having the quality that all your friends regard as being the most distinctive recognised nationally in this way. Two million people watch each episode. It's very good for television that high-quality quizzes like these are made by the BBC and are still going strong after so many years."

He added that he was very nervous. "I knew my score wouldn't be lowered if I showed it and it was better to accept the nerves rather than spend energy calming myself.

"Entering Mastermind is inevitable if you are good at quizzes, so if you can handle the stress and can think of good specialist subjects, a problem for most people, which delayed me for many years, then of course you go on because it is so important to quizzers."

He added that he really enjoyed taking part in the competition. "The only advice I would give is to choose a broad subject because it makes the show more entertaining for the viewer. You have to spend a very large amount of time on the subject so you should choose something you definitely would like to know everything about."

Courses, Workshops, Opportunities

BACK TO WORK

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The training, which is available at Blackbird Leys Community centre, helps with everything from applying for jobs to interview technique, basic IT skills and confidence building.

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Children's Page

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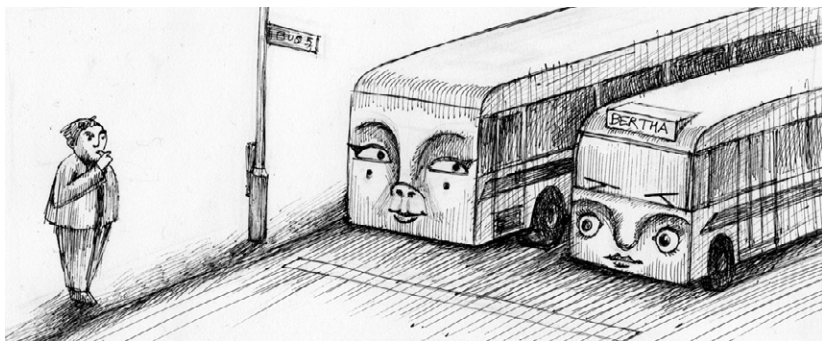
The Adventures of Bertha the Bus: part 3

Christabel lands in the duck pond!



THE STORY SO FAR – Bertha has challenged Christabel, a posh coach from London, to race her from Milltown to Longhampton and back.

Bertha and Christabel had to decide who they would ask to start the race. "I know!" said Bertha. "We'll ask the Inspector of the Milltown Council buses. Fred, dear, go over there and fetch him."

When Fred came back he was with Inspector Bullivant, a very fat little man with a moustache. Inspector Bullivant was laughing. "Well, well!" said the Inspector. "A race between two buses, eh?" Christabel flushed. She wasn't a bus; she was a coach. The Inspector went on, "Glad it isn't two of ours, or I'd get into dreadful trouble. Right, me dears. Are you both ready? I haven't got a starting pistol, so I'll blow my whistle. I'll count to three. Right? One! Two! Three!" The Inspector blew his whistle.

Fred got Bertha away before Christabel knew what was happening. In a moment, Bertha was waiting at the traffic lights on the way out from the Bus Station. The lights were red. Christabel purred up behind Bertha. "Sorry, my dear. You can't get away that easily", Christabel taunted her. "And when we're out on the open road, I shall simply streak away. Why don't you give up this silly race?"

The lights changed. Bertha saved her breath. She swung into the traffic, rattling horribly, but she knew, and Fred knew, that she had a nice turn of speed herself. Soon they were on the Longhampton road, sailing down the fast lane, leaving the green Milltown Council buses simply nowhere. Christabel hung on grimly behind Bertha, but she didn't seem to be getting any closer.

"Right, dear" said Driver Fred to Bertha. "Are you thinking what I'm thinking? This posh little coach probably doesn't know Longhampton bridge is closed for repairs. We'll dodge down through Carterthorpe village and over the Old Bridge. With any luck, your fine new friend will get stuck".

They turned left onto the Carterthorpe road. Christabel and her Driver held back for a moment, then they turned left as well. Christabel was going faster than ever, but she didn't like this road much. It was bumpy and twisty, and Christabel had a job to stay on the road. In his mirror Fred could see Christabel's Driver bouncing up and down in his seat. He didn't seem to like it either.

Carterthorpe was a pretty little village, with old half-timbered houses which leant out over the road. Near the Market Cross the road did a double zig-zag. Bertha had been round here more times than she could remember. So had Fred. Christabel and her Driver had never been here before.

Whee-ee! Bertha took the first zig-zag. She was well over on the wrong side of the road, but luckily there was nothing coming the other way. She missed the Market Cross by inches. Whee-ee! Bertha was round the second zig-zag.

Whee-ee-ee-KERSPLOSHHH! Christabel had followed Bertha round the second zig-zag, much too fast; she suddenly found out she was too long and too wide to get round, and landed in the Carterthorpe duck-pond. The ducks flapped around in an excited sort of way. The pond wasn't very deep, and Christabel's Driver waded back to the edge. He had mud all over his nice clean uniform, and a dollop of frog-spawn on his cap. He didn't look pleased at all.

Fred stopped Bertha as soon as he heard the splash. They turned round in front of the 'Horse and Jockey' and drove back to the pond. Fred and Bertha were both laughing fit to burst. Fred put on his poshest accent. "Game, set and match to us, old boy, I think" said Fred to Christabel's Driver, who nodded glumly. Christabel herself was out in the middle of the pond, in three feet of water. The ducks had stopped being excited and one of them was perching on Christabel's front step.

Christabel couldn't get back to Milltown to pick up her passengers for the tour. She had to be winched out of the pond, and then it was back to London for repairs, behind a towing lorry. As they watched her go, Fred said to Bertha "She's really got her nose in the air now, hasn't she?" Bertha smiled.

Bertha's friend Carrie had to take over the tour. Christabel's Manager rang from London to fix it up. They gave Carrie ever such a thorough wash and brush-up, and she was so excited she didn't sleep a wink that night. They even cleared out the cobwebs from Carrie's luggage locker, which wasn't used very often. Then, very early the next morning, Carrie's driver Albert drove her into Milltown to collect the tour passengers. Carrie was a few years older than Christabel, but she wasn't covered in mud and duck feathers like Christabel, which helped. She looked really smart.

As soon as Albert and Carrie had left, the Manager came into the garage to see Bertha. "I've got news for you, old girl" he said. "On Monday it's the old folks' outing to Sandbury-on-Sea. Carrie will be away for a week, so you'll have to do it. OK?"

Bertha smiled at him. Of course it was OK.

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Arts and culture focus

Photograph: Colin Garrard

FOREST IS GROWING! A special art project at The Mill on Cowley Road has got off to a flying start with donations of buttons pouring in. The button forest project is a large scale art work that is aimed at ending the stigma attached to mental illness.

A spokesman for the project said: "This month we finished our first branch, so only another 31 to go! Everyone has been helping out. We have a website now at www.buttonforest.co.uk and also a Twitter and Facebook page. We hope to be running workshops soon for anyone who would like to get involved."

POETRY CORNER

Arm Deals

by Danny Williams

Life without exception has its flaws in it,
Did not enable the devil to get his claws in it...

Muscling and jostling, and so much suffering.
The tink of tin is no great thing, in a world of wealth
that is sold on gold and bold Shiny gems.

And oil reserves wherever they may be
bring joy in reverse to every poor pea.
The peas in the ghettos, the peas in the shacks
in the poorest of countries where they don't pay tax.

Nothing gets done, and nothing much fun.
they don't have hunches, but sure don't have lunches.

Unlike the delegates and VIPs,
that can bring such countries to their knees,
they have many course lunches, with all those fine bunches.
With all these armed deals, how do the unarmed feel?

The money they make from the life's that they take,
go into more arms that they make
for more lives that they take;
for goodness sake it's already too late.

ARTWEEKS 2011

FROM 7 to the 30 May, Oxfordshire artists and craftspeople will open their studios to the public. More than 500 free exhibitions enable visitors to view spectacular art in a huge variety of different locations.

Artweeks is the opportunity for a wonderful day out:. You'll be able to meet artists, talk about their work, watch demonstrations and maybe have a go yourself. Or simply feast your eyes on a huge range of creative activity.

For more information pick up an Artweeks festival guide from the Library or visit www.artweeks.org.

FREE DANCE AND MOVEMENT WORKSHOPS

For those who have experienced stigma or discrimination related to mental health and those who would like to challenge those issues through dance

Whether you're experienced in dance or performance – or someone keen to learn more about the issues above, you're invited to join our series of three free dance workshops. Everyone is welcome regardless of previous experience or background.

Workshop 1, Saturday 7th May 2011, 2.00-5.30 pm
Moods and Motion

Workshop 2 , Saturday 18th June 2011, 2.00-5.30 pm
Drama and Movement

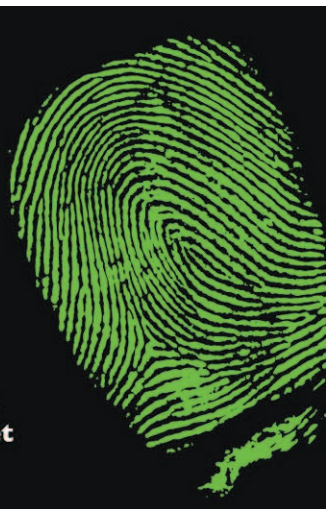
Workshop 3, Saturday 3rd Sept 2011, 2.00-5.30 pm
Composing a Public Performance
Performance planned for October 2011

All Workshops at the West Oxford Community Centre
Botley Road, OX2 0BT (5mins walk from Oxford train station)

For more details Call 07748382173 or email dance_4change@yahoo.co.uk
Booking is highly recommended

Artscape
OCVA Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action
time to change let's end mental health discrimination

How green is your thumb Greater Leys?



We know you like to take pride in your homes, gardens and the area where you live. If you are an OCHA resident living in a house or ground floor flat in Greater Leys you are invited to participate. So get planting and show us what you can do!

FREE
Hanging basket for every OCHA household in Greater Leys or container/pot for those residents in ground floor flats.*

OCHA will provide the hanging baskets, brackets and liners or containers depending on the property. The Homecare team will also be able to fit the baskets or containers for you. Residents will need to purchase the soil and the plants. We will also provide basic instructions for maintenance and care of the plants.

If you live above the ground floor and you would like to put forward any ideas for a small project in the communal garden of your block please contact us to discuss further.

WIN! Love to shop vouchers
1st place £75
2nd place £30
3rd place £15

The competition will run from May 2011 and judging will take place at the end of July 2011.

Contact OCHA for more information
Freephone 0800 980 9272
phone 01865 773000 email
joanne.dancer@ocha.org.uk or
lew.fryer@ocha.org.uk or visit
our website www.ocha.org.uk.

Oxford Garden Centre
OCHA Oxford Citizens Housing Association
housing people, building communities
PART OF GreenSquare

PHOTO COURTESY OF RENDY ARYANTO

*One hanging basket or window container/box per household.

Your local representatives

Parish Council

Chairman: Gordon Roper; **Vice Chair:** Gerry Webb; **Non-position holders:** Tanya Prescott, Chris Hatton, Cyril Martin, Mrs Ann Booker, Mrs Sheila Smith, Brian Lester, Pat Stannard, Rae Humberstone (*see City Council section below*)

For further details telephone 01865 716943 during office hours of 9am–5pm, Monday to Friday. Send mail to Parish Council, 13 Bailey Road, Oxford, OX4 3HU.

Also check leysonline.net to find out about Parish Council Meetings.

Oxford City Council

Blackbird Leys Ward

Val Smith – *Labour*
4 Flaxfield Road, OX4 6QD
☎ 07767 446051
valsmith@gmail.com
or cllrvsmith@oxford.gov.uk
(*her city councillor entry)*

Rae Humberstone – *Labour*
75 Little Bury, Blackbird Leys
☎ 01865 779678
cllrhumberstone@oxford.gov.uks

Val Smith and Rae Humberstone will be doing street surgeries every other week. They can also visit people in their homes – ring or email to make arrangements.

Northfield Brook Ward

Stuart Craft – *Independent Working Class Association*
5 Emperor Gardens, Greater Leys, Oxford, OX4 7WB.
☎ 07733 274324
Surgery: Every Tuesday from 6.30 to 7.30pm
at the Clockhouse.

Scott Seamons – *Labour*
2 Orchard Court Roase Hill
Oxford OX4 4HJ
☎ 07910 595047
cllrsseamons@oxford.gov.uk

Oxfordshire County Council

Leys & Lye Division

Val Smith – *Labour*
4 Flaxfield Road, OX4 6QD
☎ 07767 446051
val.smith@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Richard Stevens – *Labour*
Flat 6 Eaton Court, Water Eaton Road, Oxford OX2 7QT
☎ 07725 353031
richard.stevens@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Member of Parliament

Member of Parliament for Oxford East

Andrew Smith – *Labour*
Unit A
Bishops Mews
Transport Way
Oxford OX4 6HD
☎ 01865 595790
andrewsmith.mp@virgin.net

Surgery: Every third Friday at the Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre from 3.00pm

Wonder Woman diary

JANE YATES is Leys News resident cartoonist and has big plans to run a marathon this year. In her Wonder Woman diary she has been keeping us updated with her progress. Here is her fouth installment...

I HAVE BEEN reading up a bit on Wonder Woman. She has cool wrist bands that can deflect bullets, and a whip? Which I'm not sure about? I could carry a dog lead instead. As this month with the weather starting to improve I want to do some more training involving taking the spaniel out. I also plan to dye my hair to be more like Wonder Woman's. As you may recall I bought some cheap hair dye that turned it beetroot and now after a few weeks of swimming it's turned the colour of condensed cream of tomato soup.

1 March
Swam. Dyed my hair supposedly brown but went even redder! Oh well I can just tell people it's for Red Nose Day.

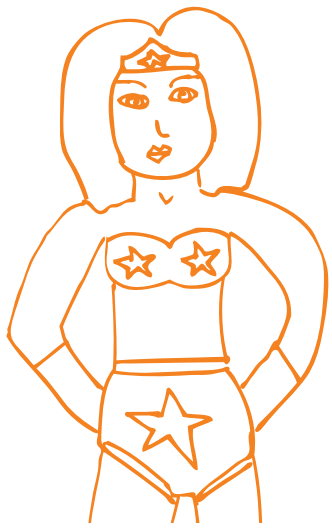
5 March
Got up early to go and swim lengths, paid my money and started to get changed, then discovered that I had forgotten my swimming costume! Went to the desk and asked to see what costumes they had for sale. There was only one in my size and that looked like it had been there since the Eighties, it was blue with a pixelated pattern all over, all that was missing was the shoulder pads! No thanks I said politely and walked out reminiscing about the good old days, before health and safety when they would helpfully fish you one out from their collection of lost property under the desk, which in this case would probably have be been more modern!

6 March
Got up very early and jogged five miles to Barton, then swam slowly for half an hour then walked three miles to the Cowley Centre. I was heading to the Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre as I had heard there was a dog show on that day. I caught the bus for the last bit. I talked to the people who were running the show and made a joke by asking if there was a celebrity class for the fat spaniel. But no sadly.

8 March
Did a class in Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre called 100% Burn. I would recommend this class as it was the friendliest class I've ever been to, all the women were really nice and the instructor was FAB. The class pushed me to the limit. I know I'm going to ache tomorrow!

9 March
100% burn equals 100% aching.... so just swam 20 lengths.

10 March
Still aching. Heard that they where getting pop tarts in Kidlington supermarket. Set of with shopping trolley on the bus, got loads of shopping but the pop tarts had turned out to be just a rumour. Got the wheels of my trolley stuck between the path curve and the buss, very embarrassing. Dragged heavy shopping trolley about a mile home. It was so heavy, so I'm counting this



as part of my training.

12 March
Pleasant and unexpected visit from my son who took me for a run. We did four short circuits along the canal and around the field, with a break of walking in the middle. This was the first time I had run with him and it was great. He gave me loads of good advice and kept me talking the whole run which helped with the gasping of air that I normally do. At the end though, I was still my normal beetroot colour and was a bit puffed out. I glanced at him and he looked like he had not run a step. (I am very proud of him as I am of all my children).

13 March
My son has given me some new music for my ipod, which has a faster beat. So I set off on a five mile run, the one good thing about the loud music was it drowned out my panting, but when the track stopped I could hear my gasping for air, which was quite scary, I began to understand the worried expressions on the faces of other joggers as they had passed me and I had attempted to smile at them. Three miles into the run I was suddenly exhausted and doubted I could carry on. This was the first doubt that I had had so far since I had started training. I tried to knock the negative thoughts out of my head, like I'm mad, I am too old, what the beep... am I doing! and carried on to finish the run and swam 20 lengths.

14 March
Dug my bike out as since I had brought it indoors it had turned into a handy coat and bag rack. Have to admit that my sudden renewed interest in my bike is due to the fact my bus pass has run out. But cycled to town and back, which is around five miles.

March 15
Its official! The spaniel is fitter than me. We went on a long walk and run. At the end she had the energy to chase some ducks, I had the energy to barely open a cream egg.

20 March
Ran five miles. Swam 20 lengths. It was mixed swimming with children swimming. So probably swam much longer as I had to swim around the little blighters.

21 March
Cycled 10 miles then swam 20 lengths. Cycled fast past a man clad from head to tow in Lycra. He caught me up at the lights. He was making polite conversation and I think he may have even been chatting me up. But he was wearing Lycra! and all over! The type that was padded for manly comfort! I never know where to look! So the second the lights changed I cycled off at great speed and he didn't manage to catch me up again . . . luckily.

24 March
Went for an enjoyable spaniel run and walk at 7.30am on a misty morning, got slightly lost in the mist on Port Meadow, but felt I was making a bit of progress as I was keeping up with the spaniel. When I got in, I put a couple of blankets down on the floor for her as I felt she must be tired, I was! but no, a shiny light caught her eye and she shot around the room, like, well... an excited spaniel.

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☎ 01865 402050

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☎ 01865 236116

Pizza Polo
34 Cowley Rd, Littlemore OX4 4LD
☎ 01865 425630

FLORISTS

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174 Cowley Road, OX4 6NQ
☎ 01865 792037

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99-100 The Market, OX1 3YD
☎ 01865 240709

GARDEN CENTRES

Acorn Nursery
Stadhamptom, Oxford
☎ 01865 891663

Oxford Garden Centres
South Hinksey, OX1 5AR
☎ 01865 326066

Pathway Workshop
Dunnock Way, OX4 7EF
☎ 01865 714111

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Suthern-By-Pass, Oxford
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☎ 01865 778709

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Reach new customers in your local area with a Leys News Classified ad. Advertise your business from as little as £10 per issue (when booking for 12 months). To book your space ring John on 01865 711756

What's on in the Leys

A quick guide to what's available locally. If you have a service or event you'd like to include, please ring 01865 711756.

ADVICE

Agnes Smith Advice Centre
Gives free independent and impartial advice. Drop-in sessions are in the centre on Mondays 2.00–4.00pm and Fridays 10.00am–12.00pm.
Also in the Farmhouse on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 10am–12pm. ☎ 01865 770206

CHILDREN

Breastfeeding Café
Mondays, 1.00pm – 2.00pm at Leys Children's Centre, Cuddesdon Corner.
☎ Camille, 0789 995 8316

Oxfordshire (The Rifles) Battalion Army Cadet Force
Thursdays, 7.30–9.30p at Sandy Lane West. Boys and Girls ages 13 to 18.
☎ 01869 259681

Blackbird Leys Youth Centre
Blackbird Leys Road. Variety of activities & advice for young people. ☎ 01865 772886.

Brownies: Thursdays, Holy Family Church Hall.
☎ Gill Manning, 01865 770959

Dovecote Afterschool Club
Mondays – Thursdays, 3.15pm – 5.00pm, £1.30 per session.
☎ 01865 712299

Maluchy group for Polish speaking families with children ages 0 to 5 years. Saturday, 10.00am – 11.30am, at Pegasus School.
☎ Agata, 07874 187 704

35th Oxford Scout Group
☎ Duncan Bowler, 0776 6293353
duncan@35thoxford.com

Rainbows
For girls aged 5 to 7. Fridays during term time, 5.30–6.30pm, at the Holy Family Church Hall on Cuddesdon Way. ☎ Laura Turner, 07787528120

Leys Kiddie Club
Mon, Tue, Thur & Fri, 9.30am–2.30pm, at Dovecote Family Drop-in Room. £1. Price includes a hot drink and a soft drink for children.

Starlight Community Project
Some of the courses and groups on offer:
● A course for women - gain self confidence, develop skills for work or further learning ● IT courses ● Dad's group ● Black British History course ● Parent Forum ● Get ready for work course ● Literacy & Numeracy skills ● Group for familes with black children of mixed heritage
☎ 01865 778514
www.starlightproject.co.uk

EDUCATION

Able Centre
Free courses in Maths and English. ☎ Annette, 776334

Blitz IT Courses
IT for beginners, internet, email, file management, PC maintenance and more.
☎ 01865 714492

Oxford Women's Training Scheme
☎ 01865 550227
hmcluckie@ocuc.ac.uk

Blackbird Leys Library
Cuddesdon Way, Opposite Top Shops.

Books, DVDs, audio books, use of computers for adults and children, photocopying, reading group, holiday activities.

Opening times
Mon, Wed, Thur: 09.00-12.00 and 13.30-17.00
Tue: 09.00 – 12.00
Sat: 09.30-12.30
Friday Closed

LEISURE

BL Swimming Pool
Blackbird Leys Road. General swimming times are Mon & Fri 5.45–6.45pm, and Sat & Sun 11.15am–1.00pm. Thursdays, 12–1pm, parent and toddlers. Saturdays and Sundays, 2.30–3.30pm, families only.
☎ 01865 467042.

Boxing training.
Tues & Thurs 7.30–9.00pm, at Youth Centre, Leys Linx, Blackbird Leys Rd.
☎ 01865 715815.

Irish dancing. Sacred Heart Hall. Weds & Thurs, 5pm.

Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre
● Bouncy fun for under 5s, Mon, 10.30–12pm
● Body Conditioning, Mon, 10am –11am
● Tae Kwon Do, Tue, 6–7pm
● Pilates Beginners, Tue, 7pm –7.45pm
● Aerotone, Wed, 6–7pm
● Tae kwon Do, Thu, 5–6pm
● Circuit Training, Thu, 7.05pm –7.55pm
● Boxercise, Fri, 10–11am
● Step & Tone, Fri, 6–7pm

All activites cost from £1.20

OLDER PEOPLE

The Clockhouse
see box right

Prime Time Over 50s group, Wednesdays, 10.30am - 3.30pm, at Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre, Pegasus Road (£1.50).
Keep fit, bingo, indoor bowls, speakers, activities and trips.
☎ 07534 740589

Golden Circle
☎ Bernard Tucker, 460592

Silver Circle
☎ 435954 (Prime time tel. via Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre)

Monday lunch club
☎ Anne Appleton, 422231

Leys Community Church Over-60s Club
☎ Keith Templar, 715815

WELLBEING

The Listening Centre
A counselling service for Blackbird Leys and Oxford. Cuddesdon Corner Family Centre.
☎ 01865 794794

Slimming World
Every Thursday, 5.15pm & 7.00pm, Leisure Centre, Pegasus Road.
☎ Gill, 01865 730009

Survivors
Fridays and Saturdays, Blackbird Leys Community Centre, 9.30pm – 3.30pm. All welcome. A self-help group of people who use or have used Mental health Services, working together to get support for, to share experiences and to press for greater awareness of the needs of survivors. Lunch available for £1. Pudding 50p. Breakfast from 50p. Card making. Table top sales.
☎ 07729 581975

NETWORKING

Leys Women's Business Network. For women who have or are interested in starting their own business, however big or small. First Tuesday of the month, 7.30– 9.00pm. £1 suggested donation. 26 Kingfisher Green
☎ 01865 395960

Leys WI
Meets at the Clockhouse on the first Wednesday of every month at 7.30pm.

☎ Rachel Fisher on 07863 563583 to find out more.
www.theleyswi.moonfruit.com

The Clockhouse
Long Ground, Greater Leys OX4 7FX. *(Look for the clocks on the roof)* ☎ 01865 395908 **E:** clockhousecdi@btconnect.com

Clockhouse open day
Sat 21 May, 11am to 3pm. Plants, handcrafts, bric-a-brac, books, raffle, refreshments, and lots more! Come and meet the community groups based here. All ages welcome. FREE ENTRY.

Over-50s drop-in advice session. FREE monthly confidential advice on benefits, debt, housing and consumer issues. Next date: Monday 23 May, 10 am – 12 noon.

Line dancing for over 50s
Monday 9 May, 1.30 – 3.30 pm (£2). Monthly dances. Beginners very welcome.

Informal support group for carers. Are you caring for an adult family member or friend? Do you sometimes feel drained, or isolated? Meet and chat with other carers over a cuppa, in this friendly new monthly group. Next meeting: Monday 16 May. 2-3.30 pm. FREE.

Yoga for over 50s
Tuesdays, 10–11am. Helps you feel better in body and mind. £2

Singing for fun for over 50s
Tuesdays, 1.30 to 3.30pm. (No session on 31 May). Great songs that are fun to sing. No pressure, no reading music, just relax and sing for enjoyment in good company. FREE.

Crafts group for over 50s
Wednesdays, 11am–12.30pm. Bring your knitting, crochet, sewing and have a natter. £1

Tai chi for over 50s
Thursdays, 10–11am Graceful, slow-moving exercise. £2

Gardening club – Thursday 5 May, 2pm. Talk on "Bugs and Beasties in your Garden". Monthly gardening club meeting of SLIGO (Senior Leys Independent Gardening Organisation). Meetings are on first Thursday of the month. Adults of all ages welcome. £2

Computer courses for over-50s. Learn at your own pace. Complete beginners very welcome. FREE.
☎ 07962 887379 for details.

CHURCHES

The Church of the Holy Family
☎ *Rev David Parry, 01865 778728 & Rev Adam Stevenson, 01865 714163*
www.holyfamilybbl.co.uk

Eucharist: Every Sunday, 10am, with children's activities.

Timeout: Reflective evening worship. Most Sundays, 6.30pm.

Church Office Hour: Mondays (except bank holidays) at 6.30–7.30pm. For hall bookings, wedding arrangements and enquiries.

Fellowship for Bible: Study, discussion and prayer. Most Wednesdays at 7.30pm. During December there will be an Advent theme.

Sacred Heart Catholic Church
Balfour Road, Blackbird Leys (car park in Poulton Place)
☎ *Phone the church office 01865 776903, for all enquiries, baptisms, and next year's First Holy Communions, etc.*

Sunday Masses: 9.30am, with music and children's liturgy;
12noon in Portuguese; and at 6.00pm.

Leys Community Church
☎ *Richard & Kate Colbrook, 01865 714153*

Meets on Sundays, 3.30pm at the Church of the Holy Family. Meetings include special activities for children and young people.

BLITZ

Volunteers wanted
Can you use a computer? Could you help others learn?

If you can spare a couple of hours each week and think you could help, call John Clifford on 01865 714492.

Drop-in times
For FREE access to the internet for adults:

Mon: 12.30 – 3.00pm
Wed: 12.30 – 3.00pm
Fri: 10.00am – 3.00pm

The Blackbird Leys IT Hub
For further details contact John on 01865 714492 or blitzithub@yahoo.co.uk
Or visit him during office hours at the Leys Community Centre, Blackbird Leys Road

Potters Court
Social Club Corner

Communal Garden -
Thanks to the efforts of those residents who are keen gardeners, the Communal Garden is looking really nice and it is hoped all residents will make use of this facility.

Dates for your Diary:

Mon, Wed and Friday: Afternoon Tea Group, 2pm

Every Monday: Bingo, 6.30pm. All welcome.

18/19 June: Visit to Oxford College and Garden.

July: River trip on Salter's Steamers from Oxford to Abingdon.

August: Visit Cotswold Wildlife Park.

For further information on visits contact Ian Morgan 01865 771066.

S & R CHILDS
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142 Oxford Road, Cowley, Oxford OX4 2DZ **Tel: (01865) 714007**

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Leys Sport

Leys News aims to bring you the best in local sporting action. If you would like to sponsor this page please email editor@leysnews.co.uk or ring 01865 711756

Blackbirds take off in new kit

THE OXFORD BLACKBIRDS are all kitted out for next season thanks to their new sponsor S & C Sales and Lettings.

The Oxford Blackbirds has been established for over 40 years. The club plays its home games and trains on council land just behind the Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre off Pegasus Road.

The club is open to boys and girls aged 16 years and under from the estate.

More than 350 children currently take part joining 11 teams ranging from under-sevens up to under sixteens. It is self-funded and arranges fundraising events within the local community with help from parents and also asks for donations. It costs around £3,000 per year to keep the club afloat.

James Webb the manager of the under eights said: "As most of the current managers played for the club as kids including myself, we learned a lot and it gave us something positive to do on an estate that has had its ups and downs.

"This is now my chance to give something back to the children to keep them active and to give them the same chances the club gave me."

James added: "With the help of local businesses like S&C Sales and Lettings who have kindly provided the funds for Oxford Blackbirds under eights to purchase a new kit, we can keep football in the community and keep this long standing club going for many years to come."

Back row*: James Webb *(manager)*, Julie Calver *(S&C Sales and Lettings)*, Martin Edwards *(assistant)*. *Middle row:* Pelumi Maxwell, Owen Exton, Delarno Peart-Smith, Tyler Webb, Latrelle Ewers, Andre Bromfield, Joe Carpenter, Troy Sinclair, Max Cartwright, Lewis Shurman, Beckham Levi. *Front row:* Aaron Langsbury, Ellis Buckle, Kia Spiers, Lamou Mbugua, Alfie Carter, Doire Flanagan, Connor Barrett. *Photograph by David Potter.

Oxford Blackbirds manager James Webb recieving cheque from Julie Calver of S&C Sales and Lettings

Calling all sportsmen and women!

Would you like Leys News to feature your sporting achievements on our back page?

Then email us at: editor@leysnews.co.uk or call 01865 711756

Roll out with the Angelz of Anarchy

ARE YOU A KEEN SKATER? The Oxford Angelz of Anarchy Roller Derby Team wants to hear from any women from across the Leys who would like to find out more about their group.

Director, Tanya Cameron said: "I am sure there are many women who would be extremely interested in Roller Derby and that are totally unaware that Oxford actually has a team. We practise weekly on a Sunday from 7-9pm at Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre. The effort and hard work that has gone into getting Oxford Angelz of Anarchy up and rolling has been enormous and we want to let more people know about us."

For more information email oxfordrollerderby@yahoo.co.uk